

AGENDA

Literacy Learning in Centers: A Kindergarten Workshop

(Local Information, Your Name, Date)

Participant Objectives

In this workshop participants will:

- Understand the importance of centers for young children
- Identify ways to promote literacy in learning centers during choice time and literacy focused centers during the 90 minute literacy block
- Acquire practical tips for making centers successful in kindergarten classrooms

1. Opening Activity: Pick a Prop
2. Welcome and Logistics
3. Introducing the Topic: Literacy Learning in Centers
4. Activity: Literacy Center Rotation
5. Discussion
6. Activity: Extending Literacy Centers
7. Discussion
8. Activity: Enriching Learning Centers
9. Discussion
10. Closure

If 5 hour option, add:

11. Activity: Extending Read Alouds into Centers
12. Discussion
13. Closure

Literacy Learning in Centers in the Kindergarten Classroom

Why are centers important for young children? Center based learning responds to how young children think and learn. Effective centers:

- Offer purposeful, hands-on, active learning
- Engage children in thinking and problem solving
- Allow for decision-making and choice
- Are open-ended and responsive to different levels of learners
- Allow children to work independently, collaboratively and successfully

Use learning centers and literacy-focused centers to promote literacy learning

Include a portion of each day for children to choose learning centers

Use focused literacy centers during literacy block so that children can work independently while the teacher works with small groups

Tips for Successful Centers

- At the beginning of the year have fewer centers and keep them simple until children learn the routines.
- Establish predictable times on the schedule for centers so that children can anticipate when and for how long they can work.
- Teach children predictable routines for working in centers.
- Use morning circle time or meeting to teach routines.
- Think carefully about the materials you include in centers.
- Teach children proper care and use of materials.
- Teach children procedures for getting, cleaning up and storing materials.
- Label materials in storage bins so that they are easy for children to get from shelves and return.
- Establish a clear system for making choices and moving through centers and teach it to children.
- Use planning board or choice chart for children to make choices of centers.
- Establish procedures for children and teachers to keep track of children's choices.
- Vary the materials in centers to keep children interested.
- Observe children at work; if a center is not working well, talk with children and encourage them to help determine changes.
- Ensure that there is room in each center for 3 – 5 children (depending on the center).
- Use a centers checklist or other record keeping method so that you can keep track of where children go.

Kindergarten Literacy Centers

Activity Cards (for trainers)

#1 Sequencing (Standards 5, 7, and 8)

Materials

A read aloud book from the reading list and that is familiar to participants such as:
Blueberries for Sal, *Good Night Moon*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, *A Chair for My Mother*
Three different colored index cards each with one label: for example, pink for beginning, blue for middle, and yellow for end.

Assignment

Read the story.
What happened in the story?
Use the cards to identify beginning, middle and end.

#2 Making Words and Sentences (Standards 1, 2, and 6)

Materials

Magnetic Letters
Magnetic boards or cookie sheets
Picture Cards
Chicka Chicka Boom Boom
3 or 4 task cards (Make your name; Make the word on the picture card; Copy words from the book; Can you write a sentence?)

Assignment

Choose some task cards and do the task!

#3 Taping Stories (Standards 3, 4, 5, and 7)

Materials

One or two Wordless Books such as: *Applebird*, *Snowman*, *The Circus*, *Pancakes for Breakfast*, *Frog, Where Are You?*, *Good Dog, Carl*.
A tape recorder
A blank tape

Assignment

Take turns reading the story.
As you read, record your words.
When you are finished, play the tape and listen to the story.

#4 Making Your Name (Standards 1 and 2)

Materials

Alphabet strip (with all letters)

Paper and markers

5 or 6 alphabet books (*On Market Street*, *Miss Spider's ABC*, *A Garden Alphabet*, *City Scene*, *Amazon Alphabet*, *ABC Drive*, *Eating the Alphabet*)

Assignment

Take a piece of drawing paper for each letter of your name.

Choose an alphabet book.

Find the letters in your first name.

For each letter of your name, you can copy the letter, you can draw the picture in the book, or you can draw your own picture of something that begins with the same letter as in your name.

#5 Finding The Same Sounds (Standards 1 and 2)

Materials

Clipboards

Markers, crayons, pencils

Bin with 7 – 10 objects with obvious and different initial consonant sounds (for example, banana, hat, scissors, pencil, marker, etc.)

Paper with one initial consonant written at the top (have more papers and consonants than objects)

Assignment

Select an object from the bin

Find the paper that has the letter sound that matches the first sound in your object

Take a clipboard and marker

Find at least 5 objects in the room as you can that begin with the same initial sound

Write the word or draw a picture on your paper.

Kindergarten Literacy Centers (Rotation Activity)

#1 Sequencing (What standards does this activity address?_____)

Materials

A read aloud book (from the reading list) such as:

Blueberries for Sal, Good Night Moon, The Very Hungry Caterpillar, A Chair for My Mother

3 different colored index cards each with one label: for example, pink for beginning, blue for middle, and yellow for ending.

Assignment

Read the story.

What happened in the story?

Use the cards to identify beginning, middle and end.

Ideas for extensions and adaptations:

#2 Making Words and Sentences (What standards does this activity address?_____)

Materials

Magnetic Letters

Magnetic boards or cookie sheets

Picture Cards

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom

3 or 4 task cards (Make your name; Make the word on the picture card; Copy words from the book; Can you write a sentence?)

Assignment

Choose some task cards and do the task!

Ideas for extensions and adaptations:

#3 Taping Stories (What standards does this activity address?)

Materials

One or two Wordless Books such as: *Applebird*, *Snowman*, *The Circus*, *Pancakes for Breakfast*, *Frog, Where Are You?*, *Good Dog, Carl*.

A tape recorder

A blank tape

Assignment

Take turns reading the story.

As you read, record your words.

When you are finished, play the tape and listen to the story.

Ideas for extensions and adaptations:

#4 Making Your Name (What standards does this activity address?)

Materials

Alphabet strip (with all letters)

Paper and markers

5 or 6 alphabet books (*On Market Street*, *Miss Spider's ABC*, *A Garden Alphabet*, *City Scene*, *Amazon Alphabet*, *ABC Drive*, *Eating the Alphabet*)

Assignment

Take a piece of drawing paper for each letter of your name.

Choose an alphabet book.

Find the letters in your first name.

For each letter of your name, you can copy the letter, you can draw the picture in the book, or you can draw your own picture of something that begins with the same letter as in your name.

Ideas for extensions and adaptations:

#5 Finding The Same Sounds (What standards does this activity address?)
_____)

Materials

Clipboards

Markers, crayons, pencils

Bin with 7 – 10 objects with obvious and different initial consonant sounds (for example, banana, hat, scissors, pencil, marker, etc.)

Paper with one initial consonant written at the top (have more papers and consonants than objects)

Assignment

Select an object from the bin

Find the paper that has the letter sound that matches the first sound in your object

Take a clipboard and marker

Find at least 5 objects in the room as you can that begin with the same initial sound

Write the word or draw a picture on your paper.

Ideas for extensions and adaptations:

Learning Centers vs. Literacy Centers^{*}

There are distinct differences between choice time learning centers and content specific literacy centers.

Learning Centers comprise a distinct portion of the day. Children are allowed to make choices from among a variety of activities or areas in the classroom. The options in each area are not dictated or prescribed to the child and are primarily open-ended tasks rather than product oriented. The environment is carefully planned to foster social interaction, independence, vocabulary development and promote learning across the curriculum in a meaningful and developmentally appropriate manner. The learning objectives for each center are numerous and ever-changing. An individual center could potentially address objectives from many curricular areas at the same time. Specific materials can be added to promote literacy and math learning. The centers are often represented in distinct areas of the classroom, such as a dramatic play corner, a block area, an easel, or a science table. The teacher may or may not be directly involved with students in the centers. Learning centers during choice time presents a rich opportunity for gaining valuable information about children through observational assessment. Moreover, the interaction among students that takes place during this time provides extensive opportunities for scaffolded learning.

Literacy Centers directly support the goals and objectives for language arts during designated instructional times. Often these centers are used to purposefully engage students in literacy related activities while the teacher is meeting with other students in small groups for instructional purposes during language arts block. The activities in each center can be either open-ended or product-oriented and commonly relate to current units of study or provide skill reinforcement. The use of literacy centers provides a valuable opportunity for differentiation of instruction during the language arts block to meet the varying academic levels of students in a kindergarten classroom.

During the language arts block, it is recommended that the center options correlate specifically with literacy objectives. While some student selected center choices may overlap with those offered during literacy centers, (listening, library corner, games, etc.), it is more likely that the choices in each type of center time are distinct from one another. One option might be to designate literacy centers in a different manner, such as in tubs, tote trays or baskets, to be used during the language arts block only. It is also more likely that the teacher may specifically direct the rotation of students through literacy centers, as well as student groupings in each.

^{*} Written by Laura Brown, a kindergarten teacher in Columbia, Maryland.

Enriching Learning Centers

WRITING CENTER

LISTENING CENTER

LIBRARY

ART CENTER

DRAMATIC PLAY

BLOCKS

SCIENCE AREA

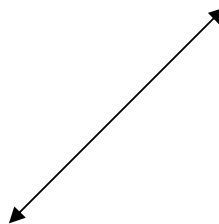
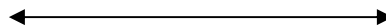
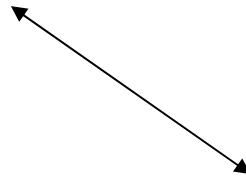
MATH AREA

MUSIC

COMPUTER

OUTDOOR PLAY

WORKBENCH



THINK ABOUT

Materials to Add



Ideas to Enrich



Standards to Address

Extending Read Alouds to Centers

Children enjoy hearing stories read aloud again and again. They also feel proud as they begin to own the text in a favorite story. Some ways they show ownership are by retelling it, “pretend” reading the story, predicting accurately what will come next in the story, and describing in detail characters and setting.

Here’s a beginning list of ways read alouds can be extended to literacy-focused centers:

- Listening to the story on tape in the listening center
- Using flannel pieces and a flannel board to retell the story
- Drawing and writing about a favorite part of the story
- Using puppets to dramatize part of the story
- Using magnetic letters to recreate the interesting vocabulary word in story
- Sequencing activities related to beginning, middle and end
- Reread the book with a partner

Read alouds can extend to learning centers. For example,

- Making a mural of the characters and setting of book in the art center
- Making puppets in the art center
- Creating the story setting in dramatic play and dramatizing parts of the story
- Creating the story setting in the block area
- Exploring a concept from a book in the math or science center
- Making recipe from a book in the cooking center
- Going outdoors for a walk to do or see something like what happened in the story
- Making patterns in the math center based on the patterns in the book

YOUR TASK TODAY!

Choose a read aloud with your group.

Read the story.

Talk about ways to extend the book into centers.

Come up with an idea to extend the book to a literacy center.

Develop a way to extend the book into a learning center.

Identify materials, ideas for extending, and standards addressed.

Keep in mind the characteristics of effective centers. Record your ideas on a chart.